

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) ~~Apparatus~~ An apparatus for continually joining paper webs, the apparatus comprising:

5        a compressive means ~~able to compress the said~~ for compressing paper webs onto an impression cylinder or roller while the webs advance toward an outlet section of the apparatus, characterized ~~in that the~~ said compressive means ~~include~~ including a roller or cylinder ~~which exhibits~~ having a hard outer surface supported by an underlying elastic surface.

2. (Currently Amended) ~~Apparatus~~ An apparatus according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that the~~ wherein said elastic surface is ~~in turn~~ supported by a rigid surface.

3. (Currently Amended) ~~Apparatus~~ An apparatus according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that the~~ wherein said outer surface of said compression roller is ~~made up of~~ a helicoidal body having a preset pitch and direction, said helicoidal body being in contact with ~~and being applied on~~ said elastic surface.

4. (Currently Amended) ~~Apparatus~~ An apparatus according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that the~~ wherein said outer surface ~~sheathes~~ completely covers ~~[[the]]~~ said elastic surface.

5. (Currently Amended) ~~Apparatus~~ An apparatus according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that the~~ wherein said outer surface of said compression roller is made of steel.

6. (Currently Amended) ~~Apparatus~~ An apparatus according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that the~~ wherein said elastic surface of said compression roller is made of rubber.

7. (Currently Amended) ~~Apparatus~~ An apparatus according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that the~~ wherein said impression cylinder is ~~is provided with~~ has surface reliefs and/or depressions.

8. (Currently Amended) ~~Apparatus~~ An apparatus according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that the~~ wherein said impression cylinder is an embossing cylinder.

9. (Currently Amended) ~~Method~~ A method for carrying out the union of two paper webs by a mutual compression of ~~the concerned~~ paper webs, the method comprising: characterized in that it includes

compressing ~~the said~~ paper webs between a pressure roller or cylinder having, ~~provided with~~ a hard outer surface and an underlying elastic surface, and an impression roller or cylinder ~~provided with~~ having surface reliefs and/or depressions.

10. (Currently Amended) ~~Method~~ A method according to claim 9, wherein ~~characterized in that the~~ said impression cylinder is an embossing cylinder.

11. (New) A method according to claim 9, wherein said hard outer surface of said

pressure roller or cylinder is composed of a single layer of steel.

12. (New) A method according to claim 11, wherein said single layer of steel is connected to said elastic surface via an adhesive.

13. (New) A method according to claim 9, wherein said hard outer surface engages said underlying elastic surface.

14. (New) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said hard outer surface of said roller or cylinder is composed of an integral layer of steel.

15. (New) An apparatus according to claim 14, wherein said single layer of steel is connected to said elastic surface via an adhesive.

16. (New) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said hard outer surface engages said underlying elastic surface.

17. (New) An apparatus for continually joining paper webs, the apparatus comprising:  
a plurality of paper webs;  
an impression roller having an outer impression roller surface defining surface reliefs for contacting one of said paper webs;

5                   a compressing roller having a hardened outer surface for contacting another of the paper  
webs and an elastic inner surface, said hardened outer surface engaging said elastic inner surface  
such that said hardened outer surface is disposed opposite said elastic inner surface, said  
impression roller and said compressing roller defining an outlet section, said compressing roller  
pressing said paper webs against said impression roller when said paper webs pass through said  
10 outlet section such that a continuously joined paper web is formed.

18. (New) An apparatus according to claim 17, wherein said hardened outer surface  
is composed of a single layer of steel.

19. (New) An apparatus according to claim 18, wherein said single layer of steel is  
connected to said elastic layer via an adhesive.

20. (New) An apparatus according to claim 17, wherein said hardened surface is  
composed of a plurality of metal elements, said metal elements being connected to said inner  
elastic surface, one metal element being located at a spaced location from another metal element  
in a helicoidal configuration along said elastic inner surface.